

TRANSCRIPT

Tele-Workshop: Outreach and Community Involvement Techniques

Well, good morning and good afternoon to some. This is Mark Conley at the American Byways Resource Center. I work for the Forest Service in the Bureau of Land Management and represent the other Federal Land Management Agency partners here at the center. And today is my honor and privilege to introduce our speaker for today's teleworkshop. Bryan O'Neil works for the National Park Service as the Superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area encompasses over 76,000 acres within Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. It is the most visited unit of the National Park System, receiving over 29 million visitors annually and it's one of the largest National Park areas adjacent to a major city in the world. As superintendent, Mr. O'Neil oversees an annual operating budget of 25 million, a staff of 425 park service employees and an incredible volunteer force of over 15,000 and over 30 major facility and program partners. In his capacity as superintendent, Mr. O'Neil has been a prominent figure over the past several years in transitioning the Presidio of San Francisco from a military installation to a part of the National Park System. In addition to his duties as superintendent, Mr. O'Neil is involved with a number of other projects within the Bay Area. These includes serving as a Board Member for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Association for the Central California Biosphere Reserve, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy California Advisory Council. Mr. O'Neil has received numerous awards including the Presidential Rank Award, the highest performance honor awarded to a federal civil employee, A Gold Performance Award, which is the highest performance recognition given to a Department of Interior Senior Executive, and the Pugsley Medal for the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration, the most prestigious award given annually to an individual in park recreation in the conservation field. And I just like to personally say the work that Mr. O'Neil has done with volunteers and building this incredible volunteer work force is certainly a showcase within the National Park System but also all of our Federal Agencies are trying to wind just how well he was able to build these volunteer in partnership. So, without further ado, I really welcome Superintendent O'Neil for the teleworkshop.

Thank you, Mark, and thank you, Chel. Can everyone hear me okay? If not, scream now. All right, so, if anything, if my voice slips at all during the conversation or presentation also, just say "Could you speak a little louder." I--you know, it's interesting because most of you all are involved in a very substantial way in sort of community building, in trying to figure out how best to position a given Scenic Byway Program to expand those that connect directly with it. I've had an opportunity to look at the community guide that--for the Planning and Managing Byways, and a lot of material that Mark was so kind to send out. So, I don't want to sort of repeat exactly what you've all learned very well from your own experiences. I think what I'd like to do is to sort of talk about how we've thought about our community building and our outreach and, you know, the kind of organizational changes we've had to make to be able to connect more effectively to the community we serve.

I think Chel had provided in advance a copy of the partnership success factor paper that we put together here. So, I don't want to go over that in specific terms. I want to sort of give a philosophical context of that. Let me start with maybe just what Mark had mentioned a little bit about the National Park assets that we have the opportunity to be stewards out here in the Bay Area. It's an amazing collection of cultural scenic recreation and natural resources that now encompass just about 80,000 acres. It's interesting in terms of complexity and the fact that within the boundaries are actually ten former military installations of which the Presidio of San Francisco was the largest. So, we've had a challenge from the very start of the park of trying to figure out how do we assume responsibilities for such a variety of different cultural, recreation, scenic assets.

So, we--I think we recognized very early here, and let me just mention before I do that, is that I've done--I currently serve as the co-chair, the Department of the Interior working team on partnerships and collaboration and also service co-chair of the inter agency, federal inter agency, working team on cooperative conservation. And I've had a chance to work in both in a large community like we do here in San Francisco, but a lot of small communities. And most of what I want to make sure that we talk about today has relevance to no matter how small the community is or how

large because it really talks about basic fundamental concepts of community building. But certainly, here at Golden Gate, we recognized very early in our efforts here that if the full potential of the park was to really be realized that its very foundations would need to be built on a different model, I love the agency I work for but it's quite conservative, very traditional, comes from sort of a military background of sort of command-and-control and the best way to accomplish work was to do things yourself. And we knew that this sort of paradigm of operation simply would not work here. And that as we looked at the Park Service culture, we knew it was an organizational culture, really, that was built on a competitive and not a sort of collaborative model. And it was built, as I said, sort or more on control and not empowerment. And in some circles in the park service, there was really a prevailing philosophy of isolation, and if we wanted to protect our parks from what many considered to be parochial community interests, short term agendas, sort of unhealthy community interference or local issues that weren't sensual to our work. God, it's pretty hard to think in my position now that that attitude existed at some time, but I think we realized that the boundary was not only a physical boundary but it was social one as well that we were dealing with. And so, I think we recognized that we needed to change this and we needed to put in place that sort of a different paradigm of we how we thought and then sort of built community engagement and the work that needed to be done. And we wanted to make sure that we built a public constituency that understood the purposes of our park, the values that the park contributed to the community and how they, as individuals, corporations, foundations or organizations could contribute towards that by being connected to it, both intellectually and emotionally.

So, we had a series of what I was--would call unifying sort of visions for the park. You know, the first one was, frankly, we didn't know what a "collaborate of organization" should look like, you know. We did our reading like every good professional should do and looking at what are the qualities that a leader has as a "collaborative leader" or what are the behaviors and competencies that staff people should have to collaborative in the nature of what they do. But there was much less available that really spoke to what is an organization that's truly collaborative in its core. What are the structures and processes that really define that organization? So, one of our sort of early goals was to really understand that if we wanted to create a collaborative culture in our organization, if we really wanted to understand what, say, a partnering culture and ethic might look like, what were the factors that really determined its success? And so, from the very start, we didn't know the answer to that. We didn't know what it looked like, but we were on a journey of learning. So, that was one of the—I want to just cover a few of these sort of what we would call visions for sort of the framework of our work. We also knew that the needs here were far beyond what government could ever possibly provide in terms of support. So, we just decided, well, rather than fretting about it and whining about it that we wanted to just say, "Well, we're--we want to be an innovation lab for alternative funding." We really wanted to know what a broad, holistic stewardship investment strategy might be and what were the component parts. We also knew that we were very naive and, in fact, the agency resisted even using the word marketing. But we needed to understand what positioning ourselves in the marketplace really meant and how did we understand how we would brand our National Park assets and the community where there's huge competition for people's time, expertise and resources.

And then, next, we also knew that we had to understand that, if this park was to become relevant to all sectors of the community and that all population's in the community saw that the park added value, that we really needed to develop a comprehensive approach to community building and constituency building to create that sort of relevancy. So, the whole notion of civic engagement in a whole different way was a core to the thinking here early. And lastly, we really knew that, you know, there's no way that the government either could or should do anything by itself and that we needed to at least create one umbrella organization as a nonprofit who would be our seamless partner in trying to look at how we realize many of the elements of what the potential of this park could be in terms of how it served the community. So, that's just a little backdrop and I want to sort of, I guess, then, sort of peel the onion and then sort of look at--sort of how we think and how we sort of organize this sort of community building outreach and stewardship work. The first component of that--what we call is a fundamental truth, and that is that, you know, people give to people but we say, people give to people, fun follows friends, friends follow engagement, engagement follows exposure and exposure follows just the reality that people give and support those things that they really can connect to--at both, at intellectual and emotional level. And so, you know, it didn't matter how important we thought

our park is or how you all may think your Byway is. Ultimately, it's only as important as other people come to believe and to--and support that notion.

And so, we realized it got down to a very simple question of who knew, who we are, what we do, who we serve and why it's important. And so, this notion of connecting people to the park values, we understood, was perhaps the most important need we have if we are to capture the further and political and financial support for our efforts. And I think as you all recognize is that elected officials, regardless of their party affiliations, want to support those things that people feel are important in their community.

And so, we realize this was all about networking and relationship building and what we call and you probably call friend raising, is how did we actually connect at a very, very deep level so people become sustaining supporters of the work that we do. So, I'm only raising this and the fact that, you know, that I--we couldn't sit here in our government office and think that the community was out there just saying, "Well, how do I help the National Park Service and Golden Gate today?" Is that we had to assume that most people out there didn't know the work that we did. We didn't--they didn't understand the value it added to the community and that we had to have a really, really specific outreach strategy by which we connect because I think as you all do is that, you know, people really, what people don't understand they're obviously not going to value, and what they don't value they're not going to be prepared to support. So, that was just continuing to emphasize to our staff is that never assume anyone knows who we are and what we do and our job is to really provide the opportunity to connect.

The second sort of notion that we needed to sort of underscore the work we did is what I would call the abundance theory; is we really do have a notion that every individual, every foundation, every organization in this community, and I would say the same for any community, is a potential supporter of the work that we do, and that rather than looking at limits in terms of opportunity is that we look at it in terms of every individual has expertise they give, can give. Everybody has sort of sweat equity they can provide. Everyone has a potential of giving financially at some level, and then our need was to figure out how we connected a project in the park, an initiative in the park, the park more broadly to those community assets. So, we really have gotten more sophisticated in what we would call community asset mapping as to really--to understand that, practically anything that we might want to do on the park, there were people in the community or organizations that had the ability and talent to provide that and that we really needed to understand that, if we were seeking, for instance, financial and business acumen assistance to us in thinking through a project, who in the community really was in that business and what how many of them were in the business and how would we think about making a contact and developing and engaging them in the work that we do.

So, we were very much understanding that the potential of support for our efforts was really limited only by our sophistication in sort of building processes to connect those folks and that we understood that sort of every individual or company or organization gives a certain percent of their available time to worthy community efforts. And of course, it varies and some is more formal than not, some companies give up to 3% and some exceedingly up to 5% of their available, sort of, billing hours to community work but that everyone gives something back to the community and that we wanted to make sure that we were competing favorably for that community service component. So, we understood we could do or drive down any small little rural community or large community and stop at every business and every home and say what is the connection we make with what that company or individuals involved with to help us in the project. The important next step to us, which was probably one of the most critical learnings that we had, is that, you know, most of people that work for at least, well, I think in most organizations, have a real passionate for the work of that organization or they wouldn't have selected that as a career sort of venture. In the Park Service, we know that our folks really have a passion about the mission of the National Park Service and the value that it contributes to the broader community. But we also understood that a lot of people that came to work for the Park Service wanted to be sort the doers of the work, that their satisfaction in their job was determined, you know, by their ability to give an interpretive law, to do the archeology, to do the performance on business analysis, to do the resource, enhance that work. But we recognize a very fundamental thing that, every time we--we have a saying here for--is that every time we do something ourselves, it's a lost opportunity for community investment, and that we

realized, by doing these things ourselves, we were closing out the opportunity to tap into the genius of the community in a way that they felt that they could contribute what expertise they had in a way that gave them a sense of connection and ownership of the values of the park.

So, we really recognize that we had to move to a different organizational structures and different concept where our people saw themselves less as the doers of the work and more as the broker, convener or facilitator of how we were able to welcome the community and connect to diverse assets in the community in a way that we invited them in to assist us on any sort of nature work that we did. So, we wanted to say, "Well, once we understood that concept, then how does it translate to an organizational structure that really facilitates that whole process?" And so, that's been probably the most challenging part of it because it changed how one sees the role and job almost needs to occur on an individual basis. An individual or our organization or your organization needs to see that, no matter how hard they may work themselves to carry out the work that's assigned to them or that they feel is needed to do to advance work, no matter how successful they are as an individual, they're only going to get one FTE of work accomplished. But if they saw their job as facilitating how the talent of the community was brought into the effort, they could not only expand by a multiple number of FTEs that support that effort but they also and even more importantly would have a community be engaged in a way that they felt like they were a stakeholder in the future of that project. So, we--once we understood this concept of facilitating rather than doing, we've had to really look at the organizational implications of those are, and rather than trying to reinvent our organization over night, we've sort of gone across the country and looking at sort best-practice how our other organizations that are viewed to be collaborative in nature and community based and really committed to trying to figure out smarter ways to engage the community, how did they organize themselves to enhance that.

So, we've been going through a gradual transition of our organization that allows us with every vacancy to occur, to begin to look at how we may fill that position differently in the future, how we might be able to even pay more for a job for someone who sees themselves and is hired as a leader in terms of how that work is accomplished as opposed to just the worker who does it--hammer herself. So, we've moved to a whole concept of what we call community liaisons and partner relationship managers; a whole series of different individual steps to begin to sort of create as best we understand it, an organization, if one would look at, would be truly sort of collaborative in its very core. Let me--before I go into the next steps, maybe if there are any questions or thoughts that people have up to this point and then we can begin to drill down in terms of how this actually manifests itself. Are there any questions out there? [PAUSE] Doesn't seem like it. So, let me--I'm not going to--what I'm prepared to provide for those that are interested, is we put together what I call a stewardship investment strategy, is that we understand that the resources necessary to sustain whatever efforts that we may want to carry out overtime here are going to be a mix of resources coming from many different sources.

So, we've developed what we call eight modules that look at how do we maximize the sort of potential for funding to support our efforts. And I'd be pleased to provide copies if anyone who's interested of what we call our investment strategy or stewardship investment strategy. But maybe we should move in to the partnership piece more specifically. It's, as I've said, we've sort of spent the last couple decades trying to explore and experiment and test ideas on understanding all of the dimensions of partnering and, you know, how and with whom to form partnerships and how to manage them, how to sort to retrofit and rescue them and how to implement exit strategies when they were needed. And obviously, in--at an organization level, we had to look at what the internal, as well as external, barriers were to us. We had to look at the attitudinal barriers. We had to look at cultural barriers. We have to look at processed barriers. We had to look at policy as well as legislative areas. And we also, importantly, after we understood those barriers as what was then within our scope to be able to change and what needed to be dealt with at a different level. We also wanted to look at how did we actually understand how we built our own internal capacity to understand the tenets of good partnering as well as understanding of the community's capacity to connect and help. And so, the success factors a copy of which I think most of you got were really developed through our sort of specific work here over a long period of time, and we're continuing to refine them. But I must say, when I travel

across the country and look at various partnerships, it's really rare to see that there's really a full alignment in a partnership that we review to all of those partnership success factors.

Actually, I think if all of those were really applied consistently, the nature of the partnership would probably be very successful. So, we understood here at Golden Gate that we needed to understand sort of the behaviors that defined being a good partner and then we needed to figure out how did we train to develop the competencies that ensure that those behaviors were going to be carried out consistently. And so, I want to maybe move. Now, does anyone want in any way to go through the partnership factors? I think what I would prefer to do, if we could, would be to sort of go through sort of our engagement strategy and see how it plays out.

Bryan--

So, that's--

Excuse me for a minute. I just wanted to let you know that, unfortunately, we did not send out the partnership success, you know, the--your paper.

Oh, okay.

We were going to hand them out after the call and put it on our website, but it--

Yeah, I thought, you know, you will look at these and probably say, "Well, yeah, yeah these," so, anyway, we put together, I guess, 21 partnership success factors. I guess you could say the only reason we put together 21, we thought we're beginning to come of age, and so we thought we'd have 21. So--but let me then sort of move this from the theoretical and to the practical applications. As I said, we do have the notion and our experience here is that, if we carry out the right engagement strategy, we can almost guarantee success in getting either an individual, a corporation, a foundation or an organization doing good work in the community to become a supporter of our efforts. Now, you can say there are exceptions to that but the exceptions are relatively rare if we carry out our work in an appropriate and systematic way. So, what we've developed is really what we call our cycle of fundraising, our incremental hook. And so, our whole strategy is to determine, I think as you all do in the Byways, who are the most important organizations to get onboard initially, who are the most important individuals in the community get involved initially and to develop that sort of connection, what are the businesses that are most important, what are the foundations and other funding sources that are going to be crucial. So, we do the same thing here; we decide, over time, we want to continue to develop and extend those organizations, foundations and individuals who see the park as adding value to the community and therefore are involved on a sustaining basis. So, we move people from a starting point of trying to figure out how do we best introduce the park to that individual, company, foundations, organizations, and then how do we move them through a systematic process where we move from that initial exposure to creating through our intervention with them an understanding of the importance of the project, the initiative or the specific sort of venture that we may be taking, and then how do we, from creating that understanding, how do we create from their involvement a caring about it, their real sort of desire to see that this is important to the community and they, as a business person or individual, might contribute towards how that project advances.

So, we move from the caring stage to action, commitment that everyone has the ability to provide some level of support to the effort and then ultimately to advocacy. So, our cycle of friend raising then goes from exposure to understanding to caring to commitment to advocacy. And what we want for an individual or an organization or a business is for them to become a sustaining partner to us in the work that we do. And we actually want people to get to love the, you know, the special places and the resources that we have and knowing that once they get to love these places, they're going to want to protect them and support them in any number of ways. I will take you through just one example and then we'll--I'd like to then maybe pick one area because an engagement strategy can work just as effectively if you're trying to develop a long term relationship with an individual in the community, whether you're

trying to create that with a foundation in the community or whether you're trying to create it with a corporate or business centers in the community or with an organization that exists within the greater community. So, you can do it on an individual entity basis or obviously you can do it on a project basis. So, I'll take--we have what we call engagement strategies underway with a huge number of entities here, and every one of these engagement strategies are at varying points in that sort of friend raising cycle or hooking cycle, and that--and so, it's a matter of trying to manage all the balls in the air and we're very fortunate here that we've got this umbrella in nonprofit support organization called the Golden Gate National Park Conservancy that really helps us to think through, strategize and to advance these various initiatives.

So, I will, as a matter of example, I'll give you sort of a corporate example, you know, representing a park perspective, but you could take that same corporate example and apply it to a Byway or an element of a Byway project. So, we have--I'll take a corporate example. We have probably dozens of engagement strategies underway with--of corporate entities within the San Francisco Bay Area and we've sort of just, as I said, they're the asset mapping to look at what corporation have a presence here, how we want to sort of build that relationship and then how do we grow it. So, we are working down our list of priorities, and ultimately, we'd love to have every business interest in San Francisco see the park as an organization of choice for their time and philanthropy. But we can't do them all at once, so I'll talk about at least, for example purposes, one, and I'll take the Gap Corporation; we have found out particularly working with corporations that getting employees involved is a very, very good start through some kind of restoration project. And so, whether it's the Gap or Oracle Corporation or PG&E or REA or any of the ones that we worked with here, we usually find the project that allows them to get their hands dirty and allows the corporation to bring management and staff together on a project.

And so, in working and knowing that this isn't a one time effort but the whole purposes of getting them involved in a direct way as to build that sort of incremental hook, is that we found out that there's five really key things that are crucial in the first venture engagement strategy, particularly with a corporation. One is that we recognize that, realistically, we really only had about 4 hours of time that were most productive in terms of projects. So, we understood--selecting the right project fit for a given corporation or organizations or group of individuals on purpose really key. So, we were very careful in trying to identify projects that--where there is an outcome at the end of that investment of 4 hours that's tangible, that people feel good about having accomplished. Because people are evaluating whether were an organization worth getting involved with beyond the first venture, we've learned that it's really essential to really have a good organization of that project or venture in terms of various tasks to be performed as volunteers, the right tools and equipment readiness, to understand how the dynamics of that group works together on that project. Three, we, this is in our engagement strategy where--and a factor that we found to be crucial and that is what the education messaging is. Since we want to connect them to the value of our work and project, we had to figure out how we embed within that entire project, from the first we've discussed it with a company or a group to the conclusion of the project, is what is the education messaging because we want them to understand the importance of the work they do and what value it's really adding. And of course, as most of you are well aware of, that breaking bread in a team, almost team building like that is really important.

So, having food and beverage in support for that is really essential to a really successful project, and then, obviously, thank you, thank you, thank you at the end. And since this is not a one time venture in anything that we want to do and it's sort of if indeed we feel that corporation or scout group or whatever it is, is worth pursuing for the next venture, we simply don't let them off the hook. Is that we meet immediately with them and say--said, "When we do our next project with you, what could we do even better that would make it even more meaningful for your company, scout group, whatever it is?" And so, we move immediately to getting to "yes," and then trying to say, "When we select the next project, is there a different kind of project that might be of interest?" And we will layout a few options. But we always want to get them back. And so, we usually will take a trail project or another restoration project as the second venture and again follow the same five steps, do it as professionally as we can because they're making an evaluation of whether this project or organization is worthy of their time. Usually, by the end of that second engagement step, we move obviously from the exposure to creating a better understanding of the need and hopefully

some caring. So, we usually move immediately to the next step of the process which is what expertise does that individual have, that company have and with the--that of course contribute to a need that we have. So, with the Gap, since they're in the clothing retail business and they operate, you know, some 4500 stores across the country, we managed through our nonprofit support group, a number of bookstores or museum stores here that are part of our operations. And so, in approaching someone or a corporation on their expertise, we always give them a reputation to live up to.

And so, we said, for the Gap, "We've always been impressed in looking at your retail operations about the care that you give in terms of how you place your merchandise, where you put your point of sale in terms of your cash register; the whole thinking about maximizing sort of the ability of someone or the desire of someone to purchase." And we said, you know, "We manage a lot of museum stores and bookstores here and we would love to be able to ask if you can give some of your sage advice from your years of learning and efforts to assist us." So, we've given them a reputation to live up to where it becomes difficult for them to say no to be asked. So, like with the Gap, we did get them to a point, a whole work team, a taskforce from the company that came out and did an audit of all of our book sale operations. And their recommendations were really solid and ones in which we fairly quickly implemented because they really made sense. And the company was quite pleased to see that their expertise was valued by the organization, but even more importantly, we did something about it. And so, with the Gap and our sort of incremental hook, we were ready then to determine the next level of engagement with them to continue sort of that incremental deepening of engagement. And so, we were going to do a march for parks here to generate community interest in the new area of the park we were acquiring. It was Fort Baker which is right north of the Golden Gate Bridge and we wanted to do a major march or walk starting on the South end of the Golden Gate winding through the Presidio of San Francisco, crossing the Golden Gate Bridge and a ferry ride back to the city from the north end. And so, we felt that that was a good project to involve the Gap in and insisting that we were ready in our engagement strategy for that with them.

So, we first approached them and said that we want, we were looking for volunteer monitors for the event, that we needed quite a few in order to, you know, make sure that we manage the event in a highly sort of professional way and they agreed very quickly to do that. And they did a call for interest in the organization. And, amazing, a number of their employees said that they would be pleased to do that. Once we had gotten them that far in the event, then our sort of ever deepening engagement, we said, "Well, you know, we wanted to have a signature take-home for the event, and you're in the sort of apparel business, and we've designed a really special sort of a T-shirt concept that we would like to talk to you about. And since you're into retail and you make high quality, excellent sort of full-cotton T-shirts and sweaters, we are asking if you would work with us in producing a signature T-shirt for the event." Well, at that point they were, you know, they were, let's say, far enough in this process where they said "Well, yes, we'll do that." And then the last step of that we said, well, you know, after a couple of weeks, we said, "You know, your employees are going to really help us sort of be the volunteers to manage the event and you're producing a signature T-shirt, why don't you just--will you consider being a corporation underwriter and sponsor the event?" And at that point it was getting difficult for them to back out and say no. And so to us, you know, that was a logical kind of project or initiative to take to them at that point of our engagement strategy. And then, lastly, we had not asked them for any money up to this point. I mean, they had to invest money in order to produce. But when we, we're doing the whole transformation of the waterfront of the Presidio of San Francisco called Crissy Field Project and our nonprofit was undergoing a capital campaign to raise the funds, it probably wouldn't be a surprise to any of you that the Gap was a significant contributor to that effort--not only were executives in the company willing to write checks but the Gap Foundation also wrote a nice check. But the thing that was most impressive to us is that it was the individuals within the company who had connected to the part in a deep and tangible way who were willing to write \$50 and \$100 checks that made a huge difference. So, that to us would be our cycle of friend raising or incremental hook.

And let me just, let me then move to taking a place and a sort of get you, sort of more into how we think about our community building. And I was going to use Alcatraz as an example. I don't know if any of you have been to Alcatraz Island, but it's a 22-acre island in the middle of San Francisco Bay that continues to be a major tourist

attraction. In fact, we're sold out for the next 7 days for every available ticket to Alcatraz, but we generate certain amount of funds from our operations there for reinvestment. And, technically, you know, you could say, well, we don't need whole lot additional partners out there because we could just reinvest the money we make out of some fee-based interpretive programs there. We have just an outstanding audio tour program. We have revenue from an evening program. We do a special program and we've got a very, very lucrative bookstore that Park Conservancy manages. So you could say, well, why would you want to go further than that and think about how you involved every component of the community in terms of how work got done there. And the answer is we like the latter because the more people that contribute to the future of the Island and believe that the work we do there is important the more political support we have as well as funding, diverged funding sources we have. So, let me just take you through some real quick, so, every facet of Alcatraz in essence we've built a partnership around. And so one interesting component out there was that the, when it was a military prison as well as a federal penitentiary there was a lot of idle time out there that was available to use to develop this really fabulous old, historic gardens, but after the prison closed and so there was almost a century of evolution of some of the best gardens that one would find anywhere, so, and it was a very much a part of what Alcatraz was, but when it closed in 1963 and the Park Service took it over, we had so many other overwhelming needs that the gardens just fell into disrepair. So, now, so we said, well, who would we want to think about partnering with, an organization or organizations to ensure the restoration of those gardens? So then that puts us on an exploration course to say, "Well, who is available and who might be interested in joining into a partnership?"

And so that exploration led, interesting for us, to an organization actually out of the East Coast of the United States called the Garden Conservancy. And they were, interesting enough, looking for, to create a presence from the West Coast and were looking for a signature project. We didn't know that. We actually found that out after our research work on a lead that was given to us from the Trust for Historic Preservation. And so we contacted them and said, "Well, we understand that you're looking for a signature project in order to create a West Coast presence. We have several projects we'd like to present to you for your consideration." And we presented those and they got excited about, actually they were excited about all 3 but they ended up saying, you know, we want to do that Alcatraz gardens project. And, so, like every partner, we test them in a very small scale to determine whether they're an organization that really is going to turn out to be an effective partner. And so we tried to create an understanding of a joint sort of vision for what that initial work would be and then we see if they can really work with us in delivering on that vision. So this has been... so we got started with this Garden Conservancy. There were some small seed money that our Park Conservancy put in to jumpstart it, but then they went out and raise those funds--their balance of the funds--to complete the first phase of the garden restoration on the Island including hiring a horticulturalist and a landscape architect who could oversee the work and who could develop a whole cadre of community gardeners who were excited, or could be excited, to come out and be docent gardeners out on Alcatraz.

So over the last 3 years, the garden conservancy has built this fabulous group of volunteer gardeners--people who always wanted to be gardeners or people who were efficient gardeners that just wanted to do their work in a special place. And, so, we have a whole team of volunteers out there overseen by a professional staff that are step-by-step restoring all of the historic gardens out there. And so we're moving them through that same engagement process I mentioned where we started slow, we got them excited about it, we looked at them, what the extension of their venture would be, and, right now, in that engagement strategy, they're out now raising a million dollars of support to be able to move through the next phase--which is phase 3 of their efforts. And they are so anchored into this project; it's actually gotten a lot of write-up in a lot of the gardening magazines, if any of you may have seen that. But, to us, you know, we could have done the gardens ourselves, but it would have a lost opportunity to find a partner who could come in, who had the energy, the expertise and the desire to engage the community on our behalf to do that project. Now, obviously, if you're working at Alcatraz, the Bureau of Prisons would be a logical partner. And, again, our effort was to begin to see how we established sort of a stronger relationship with the Bureau of Prisons and then how we continued to expand their efforts. So, you know, we started small with them on a docent program, not a docent program, on program we entered into where prisoners are brought over from a local correctional institution under supervision of the Bureau of Prisons and they do work at the park. And so, that was a logical one. They were

prisoners who were safe prisoners, who were qualified to come over and do certain kinds of work. In fact, the Bureau of Prisons even assigned people from other prisons across the country to Pleasanton Correctional Institution that have the requisite skills we need for certain kind of work. So, the whole effort with the Bureau of Prisons started with just taking advantage of that available labor pool and to develop sort of work skills so that they were pulled for an outplacement once their prison terms were up. A much deeper kind of engagement with the Bureau of Prisons where they really see this--and they rightfully do--is a critical part of the whole history of the Central Bureau of Prisons in the US. Yes, should I take a break here?

No, you're going to go. Go ahead, Bryan.

Okay. So, I guess a partnership with the Bureau of Prisons is limited only by one's vision of what new elements you add. So we keep adding new elements even to the point where we really have it advertised that where the entire senior management team of the Bureau of Prisons have had an overnight on the prison, at the prison, where they were the workers. They had their management retreat there, but they, in order to have their management retreat, they had to do 4 hours of volunteer time to the fact that they are helping us now seek out all artifacts that are not in the collections that we would love to have in the collection for curation, for purposes of being able to better tell a story. And they've also under-seen and paid for the cost of a whole exhibit on the history museum.

So, I won't get in to too much detail on that, but the whole question is they were a logical partner. There was an ability to continue to grow, the nature of their contributions. Another one, there is, we have a locking system in a cell block and, you know, we could contract to get that work done even using some revenue we get from our book sale operations there, but to us that'd be a lost opportunity not to find a partner who's in the business of fixing locking systems in various institutions. So, our homework led us down to San Antonio, Texas, to the Southern Folger Detention Company and we found out that they were the largest company in the US dealing with putting together various locking mechanisms for prisons across the country. And so we invited company officials up to Alcatraz to be able to see the place. And our need then was to inspire them to see themselves as maybe being willing to provide their pro bono assistance to us in trying to determine how we fix these old locking systems that were broken down that had been put in there in the '20s. And so over a period of various interventions, ever deeper.

We had the president of the Southern Folger Detention Company out last week, and the company has agreed to, at their total expense, restore all of the locking mechanisms in the whole cell house of Alcatraz--which is about a million-dollar investment for the company. But, again, they have a sense of pride that they are involved with restoring. And, I mean, some of the parts are so old, they have to be recreated. They feel a sense of company pride of having been involved and showing their expertise at a very, very visible place and that that's their contribution.

So, when we look at Alcatraz, what we do is look at everything that needs to be done and we try to figure out again who in the community, broader community, as appropriate, can help us. So we--anyone has been to Alcatraz has probably seen the poor condition of a lot of the structures there--and so we wanted to engage in that park the largest sort of construction firm in San Francisco called Swinerton and have them get interested in taking on doing building condition assessments at the buildings at Alcatraz. So, over time, starting with one small building, getting them interested, and the challenge on the whole of Island, we sort of build that small, little initial effort and to where the company now is taking on the job of doing building condition assessments for all the buildings on Alcatraz. Again, we have a lot of need in this park as you all have for your projects for business acumen and, so, we have engagement strategies with practically every sort of financial, major management consulting group dealing with different kind of financial and business interests. And, so, the Boston Consulting Group, which is a similar to McKenzie & Company and others we've used, is involved in Alcatraz in putting together a whole sort of financial management plan for future possible revenue generations. We did the film at Alcatraz. It's an effort we've done with Discovery Communication and which is produced an entire film at their expense of the Island. So, the whole idea that I want to get across is that we actually on a much more a systematic basis now say, well, slow down, rather than sort of doing it your traditional way by figuring out how you put money together, put together contracting, contract out for service. We sort

to say: "What is the nature? What has to be done? Who our potential partners in getting that done? How do we make the initial contact with them to interest them in the project?" And then how do we build, continue to build that interest so that they'd become again, as I said, a sustaining supporter? So, I'm going to stop here for a while and sort of entertain questions in particulars that you might be thinking about in relationship to any of the projects you're engaged in. Does anyone want to start? Mark, you got a question you want to ask?

I have a question.

Yes?

This is Patricia McNally with the National Scenic Byways Program in DC. I was listening throughout and, you know, I'm always in awe when I, I've heard you before and I'm still in awe, but the question is, when you were talking about involvement from the, you know, the park people and what they saw their job as and how you extended, sort of, that vision and the kind of things when you go out and reach out for these partners in the community or nationally or whatever, but the--I might have missed it--but the buy-in from people above you sometimes, you know, others kind of define what you're supposed to be doing or how you do it, how did you get all the okays to just go forth and partner and go forth and know your job isn't just to be in charge of the ecological area here, you can do this also, fundraising whatever? So, how did you get the buy-in from the powers that be?

Well, in certain ventures we do, we try to work creatively within whatever guidelines exist. And where we need proper change in policy, then we'll send that up and try to do the same thing--try to build an understanding of why a change in that policy might be important for the work that the organization had. But, interesting enough, there's nothing that tells me or our staff that we can't do this work. But having a nonprofit partner working with us gives us a certain amount of cover. So, our biggest challenge is the attitude on the one with out own staff.

And I will take sort of an example of our... and maybe I'll just take our archeologist as an example. You know, our archeologist isn't too much different than most agencies or organizations that have that expertise available to them. Our archeologist, you know, gets his satisfaction out of doing archeology. You know, that's the way he used to look at it. You know, and he came to work for the park service because he wanted to be doing these interesting projects no matter--and we have a lot of archaeology in the park--but, you know, we sat down with him and said, "Well, you know, there is huge interest we could build in this community on the archeology work that needs to be done in the park. You've got a list of projects that knows no end in terms of what you'd like to do if you had the people and resources to do it." So, I said as long however as you see yourself overseeing these projects solely yourself, you're limiting, one, the amount of effort that you can achieve as a single individual, but you're also limiting the amount of contract work we could even do because we're not able to contract that much work if you going to have to oversee every single contract.

So, our desire was to be able to have him see that much more of the archeology that needed to get done in the park could be done if indeed he looked at it in terms of who might be logical partners that we could work with. What universities could we work with to be able to get them to take on archeology projects under his direction and leadership? What kind of funding potential would it open up if indeed we went to funding sources and said that we were going to use that risk and develop skills and understanding of archeology by having them do the work under careful scrutiny of a field and research archeologist? So, you know, you wouldn't recognize your archeology program in the park now because it does involve our archeologist sort of brokering all of these work and effort. Much of it is volunteer work and pro bono work that's occurring in the park, our special arrangements with the UC Berkeley or your Stanford University, your other educational institutions. So, we, to me, a paradigm shift almost have to occur on an individual basis where they see that the more the community can get excited and understand the importance of what they do if they just see themselves getting the work done through a more resourceful system.

And I can't, I guess I could direct, but our effort is to inspire. You know, citizen science is becoming such an important part of our work, but I can tell you at a time not too many years ago that our natural resource staff just thought of having school children do basic science in the park was not something they could get really excited about. But if you were able to see the citizen science that occurred in the park now through multiple different kinds of partnerships and efforts, you'd be astonished. But it took our natural resource folks to see that unless more people in the community understood the importance of the protection and stewardship of resources, unless they understood it at a very fundamental level, unless we had diversified all those voices of understanding, then they were limiting their ability to get community support behind a change. I know that's a long answer, but, we, I don't like to say we ask for forgiveness, but since we're operating under a magnifying glass--and people know that, you know, we're fully capable of pushing the envelope--we also make sure that we bring in the best expertise, that if we're going to do it, we're going to do it with excellence. We found out that most of the people we asked get inspired if you say, if you're wrapping up and you're doing something different and better than it has ever been done. And people's desire to associate with excellence, to raise the bar of the possible and to be part of that change has been a very important part, I think, of our success. So, that rather than taking the risk that we're going to do something poorly and then be shown as a poor, a bad example of what happens when you think about partnering, we try to really work hard to figure out how we can almost ensure our success by the talents that we bring in to work with this on that and how we inspired them to want to be part of that excellence.

I have a question.

Thank you.

Yes?

It has to do with promotion versus publicity and delicate stepping in relation to conflict of interest, perceived solicitation, you know, how do you walk that fine line between partnering in a positive way as a government agency versus more than that?

You mean in terms of what you would say, sweetheart, deals with a given company or something or...?

Oh, yeah, just being clean and ethical.

Yeah, well, we, I mean most of, and we're very careful about that. And we, obviously, if we're going to be a contracting out for a certain work, we don't want to create a conflict of interest. We don't want people to claim that someone has their, the camel has his nose under the tent and that's why you gave that subsequent contract. We'll even go to the extremes of setting up independent non-park evaluation panels to determine on the selection of a contract to do work so we can isolate ourselves out from any accusation of favoritism. But we also, I mean, in a given community, particularly smaller communities, and to get excitement and support around a byway project, I mean, it's really important that you start sort of you with your core group, which your manual says is, you know, the tourism industry, the chamber of commerce, the business interests, the ones that can see the most immediate benefit, and to build and strengthen those relationships through these engagement strategies. But then what we found is that that only takes the marketing and support so far. That's the sort of the core we sort of see when you throw a stone in a pond. We want to continue to build that sort of wave that goes out, so, we usually will start with the core and then begin to build out. So, we're not necessarily... we don't show favoritism. We believe that everyone ultimately can be a supporter. And we have to really, really be careful about a conflict of interests and ethics because we are so visible and are so carefully scrutinized. There's not a single thing we have here that the public isn't analyzing exactly what its implications are. So, we err on the side of being very, very cautious on any ethics issues. And, so, when we do have an engagement strategy with, you know, that's even, say, Chevron Oil who has their major headquarters here or Pacific Gas and Electric, that we're not creating potential conflict of interest. Is that... are there other aspects that I didn't cover?

No, that's fine. I just kind a wondered its general overview and the perspective on that.

Bryan, this is Mark at the Resource Center. A quick question, you know, we will share your 21 partnership success factors, but do you have any specific tips on byway organizations working with Federal or State or other local government agencies and, you know, out of the 21 tips are there any thing that you really think is the most important or...?

Well, I think everything in the world ultimately gets down to networking or relationship building. So, you know, I have respect for organizations that come in a very positive way who want to build a relationship with the organization and they work very hard to look at how they do it and they might select a given project. Let's say I met last week for instance with IMBA, the International Mountain Biking Association, and, so, you know, we've always enjoyed a good relationship but I really appreciated the fact that they took the time to come in and ask for a meeting where they weren't pounding us on an issue. And they said, "If we were to strengthen our partnership with you, what steps might we take to do that? And, so, and is there an initiative that we could work together on? Or is there a project where we could demonstrate that a lot of the issues raised by other user groups about mountain biking use can be dealt with in the manner in which we demonstrate the success of the project?" So, I like organizations that cultivate those relationships and aren't just sort of saying "why are you helping us today?" but they come in and they say, "You know, we really appreciate the work that the Park Service has done. We'd like to strengthen and build that relationship. We'd like to create a very best of practice, and where do we take this engagement?" And, so, we do the same things. We reach out and do that with other organizations, but I honestly really appreciate the organizations that come in with the spirit of partnering, a spirit of trying to find sort of common vision or piece of work that we could work on together. Mark, does that answer it?

Oh, yes, thanks a lot, Bryan. That very much helps.

Yeah, because, I mean, I would suggest any byway organization. You know, it's about cultivating those relationships. It's creating them, deepening them, nurturing them. And keep it positive and keep it, you know, on ideas that can advance the project in the way that they can feel comfortable.

Well, we only have few more minutes. Are there anymore questions for Bryan?

This is Carl up in Minnesota, with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, Great River Road, and I just want to say how helpful this is. We're just in the process of hiring the staff and have some big projects to do. We really see this model as a great way to go. And as a director of service learning at a higher institution, I really appreciate your books, too. So, thank very much.

Okay.

Well, thank you, Bryan, for providing your words of wisdom today on partnerships. I really appreciate it. I did quickly email out to those that I thought was on the line the success factor. However, we will post that additional file. I'll get it posted tomorrow on the discussion forum for everybody, so you can find it tomorrow morning accessible to everyone. So I, again, thank you very much for your...

Okay. And I'll go ahead and send to you, Shelly, I the copy of this little paper on stewardship investments strategy.

Excellent!

So that it gives you at least a sense of how we think about the breadth of potential funding support, so there's, you know, there's strategy around volunteerism, strategy around alternative public sources of funding, all of that.

Fabulous. Thank you.

That would be fabulous. I will send that out as well with the, with the part of your success factor. So, thank you.

Thank you.

Okay. Are we signing off here?

We're signing off!

All right.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Thank you, I have three pages of notes. Bye-bye.

Goodbye.

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